Catalogue Information

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data
Owen, Lorne.
B.C. farm employers' handbook

Prepared by Lorne Owen, Pat Davidson and Lindsay Brooks. Cf. Acknowledgements.
Contents: Book 2. Hiring.
ISBN 0-7726-1454-7 (set).—ISBN 0-7726-1456-3 (Bk. 2).

1. Farms - British Columbia - Personnel management - Handbooks, manuals, etc. 2. Farm management - British Columbia - Handbooks, manuals, etc. I. Davidson, Pat, 1944 - . II. Brooks, Lindsay. III. British Columbia. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. IV. Title. V. Title: Hiring.

S562.C3093 1991 630.68'3 C92-092007-1

B.C. Farm Employers' Handbook

Book Two
Hiring

The B.C. Farm Employers' Handbook is a series of five booklets designed to assist farm managers to effectively manage their human resources.

The books in the series and a brief outline of their contents are as follows:

Book One: Personnel Planning and Regulations
- Deciding to Become an Employer
- The Personnel Planning Process
- Complying with Regulations
- Keeping Records

Book Two: Hiring
- *Objectives*
- *Job Description*
- *Recruitment*
- *Interviewing*
- *Testing*
- *Checking References*
- *Making the Selection*
- *Offering the Job/Advising Unsuccessful Candidates*
- *Employment Agreement*
- *Orientation*

Book Three: Supervising
- Leadership
- Supervision
- Delegation
- Personal Style
- Special Supervisory Situations

Book Four: Motivating, Evaluating and Training
- Managing for Peak Performance
- Performance Evaluation
- Wages, Incentives, Benefits
- Training

Book Five: Communications, Problem Solving & Discipline
- Communications
- Dealing with Conflict
- Disciplining
- Dismissal and Termination

92-03361/

Acknowledgements

The material in this book builds on earlier works published by other agricultural extension agencies in Canada and the United States. Without the leadership offered in those works, this material could not have been put together. The people and the agencies for whom they work are listed in the Reference section at the end of this book.

We also acknowledge the input from Garth Bean, Agricultural Employment Services and assistance from other Agricultural Employment Centres. We appreciate the farmers and managers who reviewed and offered input to the first draft: Bruce McTavish, John Van Dongen, John Schroeder, Howard Joynt and Garth Bean.

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This publication was funded by the Productivity Enhancement Program of the Canada-British Columbia Agri-Food Regional Development Subsidiary Agreement (ARSDA 1985-90). The Agreement, which provides a variety of programs for the development of the agri-food industry, is cost-shared equally by the governments of Canada and British Columbia through Agriculture Canada and the British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, respectively.

The responsibility for the publication as written and all conclusions reached therein is the author's alone. The publication does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the federal and provincial governments which funded the publication.

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Introduction

The B.C. Farm Employers' Handbook is written as a guide to farm managers. The book will assist you to recruit better employees; to supervise, motivate and train your employees to achieve maximum performance; and to discipline and fire them should that be required.

Sound human resource management can result in increased productivity, reduced staff turnover, motivated employees and satisfied managers. Use this Handbook to help you achieve these ends.

The Handbook is divided into five books. We don't expect you to read each from cover to cover. Instead, familiarize yourself with the contents, place the books where they can be easily found and refer to them when you have need for specific information.

This book is the second in the series. The first book looks at the personnel planning process and offers a guide in deciding how many and what type of employees are required. Book 1 also advises on the regulations about which an employer needs to be aware.

This book outlines the process to follow when hiring an employee. There are ten steps in the hiring process.

The Hiring Process

- ❒ Know Your Objectives
- ❒ Job Description
- ❒ Recruitment
- ❒ Interviewing
- ❒ Testing
- ❒ Checking References
- ❒ Making the Selection
- ❒ Offering the Job
- ❒ Employment Agreement
- ❒ Orientation

Objectives

The Hiring Process

- [x] Know Your Objectives
- [ ] Job Description
- [ ] Recruitment
- [ ] Interviewing
- [ ] Testing
- [ ] Checking References
- [ ] Making the Selection
- [ ] Offering the Job
- [ ] Employment Agreement
- [ ] Orientation

In Book 1, we said that the personnel planning process should result in the employment of the correct number of staff, with the necessary talents and skills, doing the appropriate job, performing the right activity and above all working towards the achievement of objectives.

The first step in hiring a new employee is to have well defined goals and objectives.

Knowing your goals will help you decide how many and which kind of employees you need. By knowing your goals, you can share them with your employees so that you all work toward the same end.

Farm Goals

Goals should help you to achieve your overall purpose, or mission, in farming. To write a mission statement, you need to answer the following questions:

- Who are we?
- What do we do?
- Whom do we serve?
- How do we serve?

Here's an example of a mission statement for Mason's Berry Farm.

> *Mason's Berry Farm grows strawberries, blueberries and raspberries for wholesale to major supermarket chains across Western Canada. Careful cultivation of the newest and most succulent berry strains distinguishes Mason's Berry Farm as one of the leading farms in the Fraser Valley for berry quality and harvest quantity. Streamline organization and a comprehensive employee program for pickers ensures optimum freshness and rapid transportation to population centres.*

Goals provide direction to your use of time, money and energy. To be effective, the goals you set should be an extension of your values. For example, the goal to write job descriptions for each position on your farm reflects the value you place on organizational structure and efficiency.

Divide your goals into three types:

Type of Goal	Duration	Example
Short Term	Less than one year	Pay of an operating loan balance with the summer berry receipts; get pesticide applicators' licence
Intermediate	From one to five years	Develop a new marketing plan by 1992:break into several short term goals.
Long Term	From five years to a lifetime	Expand operations to become one of the most successful berry farms in the Lower Mainland within 10 years: break into several short and intermediate term goals.

To plan your farm goals, focus on the following questions:

1. What product or service do I supply? _____

2. Who are my competitors? _____

3. What do I do best in my business? _____

Your answers to these questions will help you determine the future directions you wish your farm business to take.

Once you determine your goals, apply the following steps:

- Set a deadline to achieve the goal
- List obstacles to overcome
- Identify the people, groups and organizations needed to accomplish the goal
- Write down a list of the benefits

Goals are dreams with a deadline.

The key to goal achievement lies in your willingness to constantly review and update your goals as circumstances change. Apply the SMAC test to each goal:

S Specific

M Measurable

A Achievable

C Consistent with your values

For example, a goal to remodel your dairy barn within the next five years does not pass the SMAC test because such a goal is too vague. Here's a revised version:

To add 10 cows to the dairy herd in 1995, we need to save $30,000 out of each year's profits from 1991 to 1994.

Labour Goals

Written goals are the blueprint for successful labour relations. If goals are articulated, written down and shared with staff, it is much easier for a manager to develop plans, communicate them to others and get the job done.Goals which are written down are less likely to get lost.

Labour goals may include safe working practices, improved production efficiency, low staff turnover, careful equipment and livestock handling, or delegating certain responsibilities and activities. Goals will vary greatly from farm to farm and may be different for different workers. Once goals are written down, they can then be translated into detailed day-do-day activities.

When setting labour goals, it is wise to think about how you will measure results and when you expect to see them.

Examples of Labour Goals

- ❒ Low staff turnover
- ❒ High productivity
- ❒ Safe work environment
- ❒ Careful equipment and livestock handling

Job Description

The Hiring Process

- [x] Know Your Objectives
- [x] Job Description
- [ ] Recruitment
- [ ] Interviewing
- [ ] Testing
- [ ] Checking References
- [ ] Making the Selection
- [ ] Offering the Job
- [ ] Employment Agreement
- [ ] Orientation

Purpose and Use

A well prepared, written job description is a very important tool in effective personnel management. It provides both you and the employee with a working statement of the specific duties required.

A job description is used to make numerous personnel decisions and can prevent many headaches. Some uses of a job description are listed below.

- Preparing a help wanted ad
- Screening applicants
- Selecting the best applicant
- Orientating the new employee
- Developing performance standards if not part of the job description
- Training
- Performance appraisal for employee
- Recognition of a job well done
- Corrective action
- Mutual understanding between employer and employee
- Dismissal
- Defense, if a dismissal is challenged.

How to Prepare a Job Description

If there are no job descriptions for any of the positions on your farm, start by writing your own job description by answering the the following questions:

1. What is your job title? _____

2. Who is your immediate supervisor? _____

3. How would you summarize your job in one sentence? _____
_____
_____

4. List your three principal duties:
   a) _____
   b) _____
   c) _____

5. List three minor functions:
   a) _____
   b) _____
   c) _____

6. What wages and benefits do you receive? _____
_____
_____

7. What are your work hours and vacation times? _____
_____
_____

8. What qualifications do you have for your job?
   Education: _____
   Experience: _____
   _____
   Skills: _____
   Personal Qualities: _____
   Other: _____
   _____

The next step is to develop job descriptions for the others working in the business. You may have to gather information about the tasks actually done or that will be required in a new position. Here are some tips on how to proceed.

- Interview an employee who already does the job
- Ask the employee to complete a questionnaire about the duties
- Observe the employee on the job to determine the specific duties performed
- Ask the employee to record every task performed in a typical day or week.
- Use your business organizational chart as the basis for writing the job description
- Keep the job description as brief as possible
- Make the job sound interesting. For example, "being responsible for livestock nutrition" sounds more interesting than "feed livestock".
- Make the description specific but avoid making it too restrictive. For example, "being responsible for the grain harvest" encompasses more than "operate combine" and is also more appealing and motivating.

A Job Description Should Include

Job descriptions take many forms and yours should be designed to reflect your farm and your needs. An effective job description contains the following items.

- The job title
- A job summary - a brief statement of the major responsibilities of the person with this job.
- Job qualifications - education and work experience necessary to do this job. Make sure that the requirements are essential to perform the tasks and do not violate any human rights.
- Scope of duties - a list of the major activities the person will perform.
- Relationships - who is the employee responsible to, and who is responsible to the employee, and what authority does the employee have.
- Performance standards - performance standards may be put in a job description or kept as a separate document depending on the situation. If the job is technical and performance standards can be easily measured, it may be best to include them. (Example: be able pick a minimum of 10 pounds of berries an hour.) However, if the job includes many responsibilities, some of which require relatively subjective performance standards, inclusion of such standards would make the job description very cumbersome.
- Wages and work hours

Sample Job Description

The following is a sample job description written for the position of herd manager on a dairy farm.

On page 10, we've provided a blank job description form for your use.

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Dairy Herd Manager

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION: Responsible for overall management of the dairy herd including milking, herd health and breeding. Supervises employees and plans feeding program in co-operation with farm owner.

SALARY RANGE: MINIMUM: $xxx.00/week **MAXIMUM:** $xxx.00/week

WORK HOURS: 5:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. **AVERAGE HOURS/WEEK:** xx

DAYS OFF PER WEEK: 1.5

OVERTIME: **NEVER**___ **SELDOM** X **OFTEN**___

OTHER BENEFITS: House in very good condition.Two weeks paid vacation after one year.

DUTIES: Overall dairy herd management including milking, herd health, breeding, and raising of replacements. Plan and implement feeding program in consultation with farm owner. Supervise other dairy employees responsible for milking and feeding.

MINOR FUNCTIONS: Assist with field work and/or machinery maintenance as time permits.

SUPERVISED BY: Farm owner

SUPERVISE: 3 or 4 other employees who milk and otherwise care for dairy herd

REPORT TO: Farm owner

ASSIST WITH OTHER JOBS: Field work - as time permits during peak periods of planting and harvesting

QUALIFICATIONS:

FORMAL EDUCATION: At least two-year degree from Ag or Technical School with major in animal or a related field.

EXPERIENCE: At least three years experience managing a dairy herd.

SKILL REQUIREMENTS: Able to work with modern milking equipment and automated feeding system. Keep herd health and breeding records up-to-date. Ability for train milking staff.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: Good interpersonal skills

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS:

QUANTITY AND QUALITY REQUIREMENTS:

WORK ENVIRONMENT: Modern 200-cow freestall operation with 500 acres of field crops.

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: _____

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION: _____

_____

_____

SALARY RANGE: MINIMUM: _____ MAXIMUM: _____

WORK HOURS: _____ AVERAGE HOURS/WEEK: _____

DAYS OFF PER WEEK: _____

OVERTIME: NEVER____ SELDOM____ OFTEN____

OTHER BENEFITS: _____

DUTIES: _____

_____

_____

MINOR FUNCTIONS: _____

SUPERVISED BY: _____

SUPERVISE: _____

REPORT TO: _____

ASSIST WITH OTHER JOBS: _____

QUALIFICATIONS: _____

FORMAL EDUCATION: _____

EXPERIENCE: _____

SKILL REQUIREMENTS: _____

_____

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: _____

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS: _____

QUANTITY AND QUALITY REQUIREMENTS: _____

WORK ENVIRONMENT: _____

_____

Recruitment

The Hiring Process

- ☑ Know Your Objectives
- ☑ Job Description
- ☑ Recruitment
- ☐ Interviewing
- ☐ Testing
- ☐ Checking References
- ☐ Making the Selection
- ☐ Offering the Job
- ☐ Employment Agreement
- ☐ Orientation

A good recruitment program starts on the assumption that there are suitable people available.

Employees are available to fill most employment situations. ***Recruitment is the key to finding them.*** *Good employer-employee relations is the key to keeping them.*

Sources of Labour

The following is a list of possible sources of labour for B.C. farms.

- men or women from other farms
- women or men with related experience in non-farm jobs
- high school graduates with farm background
- graduates from agricultural colleges or related programs
- graduates from a Faculty of Agriculture at a university
- retired persons in good health
- disabled persons when the disability does not interfere with job performance
- lists available from Agriculture Employment Services, Canada Employment Centres and private firms

Determining the most appropriate recruitment sources depends upon the time available and the type of position you need to fill.

The following chart lists a number of methods you might use to find employees, the advantages of the method and some considerations if you use that method.

Where and How to Recruit

SOURCE	ADVANTAGES	CONSIDERATIONS
Agricultural Employment Services	You save time by only contacting the few top candidates recommended.	Provide AES with as much prior notice as possible
Recommendations from current employees	Current employees understand your needs and have a stake in who you hire.	Maintain a professional manner to avoid possible friction with the employee who made the recommendation.
Personal contact with good employees in your area	You can see how they work before you hire them.	Determine what advantages your farm could offer them.
Advertisements in local newspapers	You spend relatively little money, reach a large audience, and get results quickly.	Write a *specific* ad to prevent too many unsuitable candidates from applying.
College placement offices	You reach the type of employee you want for higher level positions.	Coordinate your search with the college year to find students before they take other positions.
Job announcements on bulletin boards	You can target a specific area such as local schools to find seasonal help.	Make your job announcement specific and easy to read.
Talk to neighbours	They know you; they may know of people who are looking for employment.	Be specific about the type of employee and qualifications you require.

Developing a Job Ad

Most of the recruiting methods available require the use of some kind of job advertisement. To write an ad, refer to the job description for the position and, if possible, start the advertising process well in advance of the time you need the new employee.

To reach the maximum number of qualified applicants, place your advertisement where the most applicants of the type you want will see it. For example, if you are advertising a management position, use farm magazines and larger newspapers or the college placement offices; if a less senior position, use local papers, bulletin boards in high schools and community centres.

An effective ad fulfills three distinct functions: to inform, to promote and to screen.

- **Inform:** The ad should include a job title, brief description of the major responsibilities, wages, hours and how the applicant contacts you. Avoid the standard request for a resume; ask instead that interested persons come to your farm and complete an application.
- **Promote:** The ad should attract those who are qualified. Put something in the ad to spark the interest of qualified people. Include the benefits you offer. Possibilities include housing, bonus programs, company values, opportunities for advancement etc. If you offer it and are proud of it, put it in the ad.
- **Screen:** Include qualifications, experience, physical requirements, and specific job requirements. This information will screen out applicants who lack sufficient background for the position yet not to be so inflexible as to turn away candidates with good potential.

What to Include in Job Ad

- ❒ Job title
- ❒ Distinguishing features of work
- ❒ Hours
- ❒ Remuneration
- ❒ Benefits
- ❒ Location
- ❒ Requirements & references
- ❒ How to apply

Look at the following three ads for the same job, and decide which one you would want to apply for.

> Wanted: Hired man. Phone 000-000-0000

> Wanted: Person for general farm work, fulltime, on a beef and crop farm. Requires two years farm experience or equivalent and/or two years ag education beyond high school. Good wage and benefit package. Call 000-000-0000

> Oak Bluff Farms has an opening for a person to assist the owner/operator in management and production of beef and crops. The position offers considerable variety and opportunity for growth. At least two years farm experience or equivalent and/or ag education beyond high school required. Pay and benefit package based on applicant's experience and training. Write for application to Oak Bluff Farms (address) or come to farm and request an application form.

To assist you in writing an ad, start by completing the following form to ensure you include all the relevant information:

JOB TITLE: _____

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES_____

WAGES AND HOURS_____

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE_____

BENEFITS_____

CONTACT METHOD _____

As you write the ad, concentrate on "selling" the position rather than saving words. Use a natural, friendly style. Use large type and interesting graphics to highlight the job title. Start off the advertisement text with a catchy opening line or phrase.

Developing an Application

Once you've developed a detailed job description, you can use it to determine the list of qualifications and skills you require for a new employee. You may wish to clarify your goals by listing both the necessary and the desired qualifications. You can then screen the applications against your list to select four or five top candidates to interview.

The following list includes necessary and desired qualifications for a position of dairy herd manager. You might draw up a similar list for your position.

POSITION: Dairy Herd Manager

NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS	DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS
Education: 2 year degree from Agricultural or Technical School with a major in animal science.	**Education:** Bachelor of Science in Agriculture with a major in animal science.
Experience: 3 years managing a dairy herd	**Experience:** 2 additional years experience with milk product processing
Skills: Ability to work with modern milking equipment and automated feeding system	**Skills:** Ability to train milking staff and to keep computerized records
Personal Qualities: Good interpersonal skills and efficiency	**Personal Qualities:** Outgoing and pleasant personality
Other Qualifications: Knowledge of agricultural practices	**Other Qualifications:** Knowledge of current management theory

On the following page, we've provided a sample application form.

EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

Phone No. _____ Social Insurance No. _____

Type of accommodations required _____

Highest level of education completed _____

Farming background and experience _____

_____

_____

Have you any special training? _____

Do you hold a valid driver's licence? _____ Type _____

Do you have a physical disability which will affect your ability to perform any of the functions of the job for which you have applied? _____ If the answer is "Yes" what functions can you not perform and what accommodations could be made which would allow you to do the work adequately?

_____

List any special skills, abilities and interests: _____

_____

List Former Places of Employment (last 5 years):

Date Hired	Date Left	Name & Location of Employer	Type of Work	Wages	Reason for Leaving

List of References (include name, address, phone number):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Interviewing

The Hiring Process

- ☑ Know Your Objectives
- ☑ Job Description
- ☑ Recruitment
- ☑ Interviewing
- ☐ Testing
- ☐ Checking References
- ☐ Making the Selection
- ☐ Offering the Job
- ☐ Employment Agreement
- ☐ Orientation

The employment interview is the most commonly used source of information in employee selection. It is one of the best ways for you to assess a prospective employee and try to predict if he or she would make a valuable contribution to your farm operation. Making such predictions is difficult, but **using a systematic approach to interviewing will help.**

The most promising applicants, as you have determined by screening the application forms, should be invited to your farm for an interview.

The interview serves two principal functions:

- allows the employer an opportunity to compare each applicant's qualifications and aptitudes with the job requirements
- provides the applicant with the opportunity to determine if he or she wishes to work for your farm.

Screening

The first step is to screen the application forms and decide which applicants you wish to interview. Screening is often one of the hardest tasks in the hiring process. It is a test of your application design!

Read all your applications. Assess each one keeping in mind your list of desirable traits you are seeking for the position. Start by eliminating those candidates who don't meet the basic education or experience requirements.

You can determine a great deal about candidates by studying their job applications. Look particularly for the following characteristics:

CHARACTERISTIC	PERSONAL TRAITS REVEALED
Neatness: minimal crossing-out, clearly presented	Reveals a caring attitude and a conscientious attention to detail.
Completeness: all sections of the application filled out	Reveals openness about the past and an ability to follow instructions
Outside Interests: hobbies, club activities, etc.	Provides information on the *type* of person and indicates how the person may fit in with other employees.

Select no more than five or six candidates to interview. Interviewing more will probably lead to confusion when you go to make the decision. If, after the interviews, you have not found a qualified person, you can invite other applicants for an interview or re-advertise.

Interview Questions

Apply the following three steps to develop your interview questions.

Step 1: Make a list of the behaviours you are looking for in a new employee. A middle management position, for example, would require the ability to work with people, make decisions, and take on responsibilities. The person would need technical and leadership skills.

Step 2: Write a list of questions which will allow you to decide if the person has these abilities and characteristics. Make the questions open-ended to encourage detailed responses. Avoid questions which can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no". "Why did you quit your job at that time?" will get a more revealing response than, "Did you quit to make more money?"

Step 3: Determine a rating scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) that you can use to evaluate a candidate's response to each question.

Be aware, as you prepare your interview questions, that you are not allowed to discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, colour, national origin or religion. After you've drafted your questions, look carefully at them to make sure that they don't violate human rights.

The following chart contains an example of an interview checklist that could be used. You might alter the questions somewhat, depending on the position you are trying to fill.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

Foreman Position

Behaviors	Questions designed to predict behaviours	Answer Rating
Job Stability	How long have you been in the last two jobs?	1 2 3 4 5
	What are your career goals?	1 2 3 4 5
Ability to Make Decisions	Describe a situation in a previous job where you had to make an important decision. What did you decide? How did you feel about being in that situation?	1 2 3 4 5
	Assume your boss was not around and the following situation arose (describe a decision making situation). What would you do and why?	1 2 3 4 5
	How do you feel about making decisions which impact on the success of the business you work for?	1 2 3 4 5
Ability to Work with People	Given a choice, do you prefer to work alone or in cooperation with others?	1 2 3 4 5
Technical Skills	Describe your experience with developing pesticide spray schedules.	1 2 3 4 5
	What farm equipment have you operated?	1 2 3 4 5
	Describe your knowledge of animal nutrition programs.	1 2 3 4 5
Ambition/ Industriousness	Describe a particularly productive day in a previous job.	1 2 3 4 5
	Describe a major job-related task you have performed that you are quite proud of.	1 2 3 4 5
Ability to be Trained	Describe your formal educational background.	1 2 3 4 5
	Have you voluntarily taken any adult educational courses.	1 2 3 4 5
	Describe an instance where you had to learn a new skill for a former job.	1 2 3 4 5
Leadership	Have you ever been an officer in a club or community organization? Describe.	1 2 3 4 5
	What supervisory roles have you played in previous jobs?	1 2 3 4 5
	How do you feel about supervising the work of other people?	1 2 3 4 5
Good Attendance	In the past year, how many days off work have you taken for sickness or personal reasons?	1 2 3 4 5

Interview Techniques

You may feel like you're in unfamiliar territory when it comes time to conduct an interview. Remember a few things which may help:

- you are in control of the interview
- with proper preparation, you can make the interview a positive experience for both applicant and yourself
- whether you realize it or not, the applicant is also interviewing you. Part of your task may be to sell the job so that your first-choice applicant will want to come work for you.

The following suggestions will help you conduct a successful interview. Choose a place to conduct the interview that is quiet and where you can avoid interruptions.

1. **Put the applicant at ease**. The more you can do to reduce any tension, the more meaningful will be the communication between the two of you. A handshake and friendly smile are a good start.

2. **Stick to your plan.** Follow your list of interview questions. Your final decision will be more difficult to make if you do not get the same information from each person. Allow yourself enough time to conduct each interview - about 45 minutes. If you plan to do testing, allow about one hour for that.

3. **Listen.** If you dominate the conversation you will learn very little about the applicant. Encourage him or her to do most of the talking. Remember to ask open-ended questions.

4. **Be mindful of your own personal biases.** Do not overlook highly qualified applicants just because their religion, ethnic background or some other trait is different from what you had in mind.

5. **Fulfill your responsibility to the applicant**. Based on the information you provide, he or she must decide whether or not to accept the position if it is offered. Provide a written list of the benefits that come with the job. Leave adequate time to take the applicant on a tour of the farm. Tell each candidate when you expect to make your decision and that you will notify them of that decision one way or the other.

Interview Timetable

Prepare for the interview by reviewing the candidate's application form and noting the qualifications that you find most suitable to the position.

Select a quiet, comfortable place in which to conduct the interview and allow 35 to 50 minutes followed by a testing period of about one hour. Remember that the candidate is also interviewing you, so project a positive image. Assume that the candidate is the ideal person for the job and start selling yourself from the start. If the candidate doesn't turn out to be the person you want, he or she may still speak well of you to someone who could be perfect for the job. Here's a suggested timetable:

INTERVIEW TIMETABLE	
ACTIVITY	**MINUTES**
Greeting: welcome the candidate in a positive and friendly manner.	1
Small Talk: put the candidate at ease; show a personal interest; offer coffee.	2
Job Description: provide a full and clear explanation of the job and how it fits into your organization.	5
Housekeeping Details: outline wages, hours, special conditions, housing arrangements, etc.	2
Answer questions: focus on the candidate's questions: what does he or she want to know about your organization and the position applied for? The candidate's questions will reveal a great deal about personal motivation, values, etc.	5 to 10
Asking questions: stick to plan: use the interview checklist you've developed to ensure you ask each applicant the same questions and to simplify the selection process. Make specific notes during and immediately after the interview.	15 to 20
Continue selling/Cut it off: if the applicant interests you, introduce him or her to other employees and give a short tour of the farm; if the applicant does not interest you, bring the interview to a dignified close. Always specify when you will inform the applicant of your decision.	5 to 10
Total Interview Time:	35 to 50 minutes

INTERVIEW REPORT

Name of Candidate _____ M ☐ F ☐

	Above Average	Average	Below Average
Appearance	☐	☐	☐
Communication Skills	☐	☐	☐
Application Complete	☐	☐	☐
Personality	☐	☐	☐
Work Experience	☐	☐	☐

Available Weekends and Evenings: Yes ☐ No ☐ Occasionally ☐ Days only ☐

Comments _____

_____

_____

	Applicant Outstanding	Applicant Above Average	Applicant Average	Applicant Below Average
Personality: friendly, quiet, mature	☐	☐	☐	☐
Appearance: poise, dress, physical qualifications related to work	☐	☐	☐	☐
Communication Skills: fluency, articulation	☐	☐	☐	☐
Education & Training: related to and adequate to position, hobbies	☐	☐	☐	☐
Work Experience: other related jobs	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall Evaluation	☐	☐	☐	☐
Special Skills and Interest				

Testing

The Hiring Process

- [x] Know Your Objectives
- [x] Job Description
- [x] Recruitment
- [x] Interviewing
- [x] Testing
- [ ] Checking References
- [ ] Making the Selection
- [ ] Offering the Job
- [ ] Employment Agreement
- [ ] Orientation

Purpose of Testing

An applicant's qualifications may look very good, but how do you know how well the person can perform certain tasks. Skill tests are a way of allowing the applicant to demonstrate his or her abilities.

An example may illustrate the importance of testing.

Nick and Marsha Adams selected five candidates for the position of tractor driver. The position required a candidate with several years experience with farm work, the ability to train others, excellent driving skills, and a knowledge of mechanics. Here's how they rated four candidates on a scale of 1 to 5 on the basis of their interviews.

Candidate	Qualifications/Personal Traits	Ranking
Mark	10 years experience, college courses in mechanics, outgoing	4.5
Alice	2 years experience, limited knowledge of farming, enthusiastic	3.8
Roy	3 years truck driving experience, 2 years of college, ambitious	4.2
Bert	20 years experience, no formal training, friendly	4.3

Judging from the interview ratings, Mark would be the obvious choice for the position. However, Nick and Marsha chose to base their final decision on a half hour test that required the candidates to change the oil in the tractor and manoeuver it around a field. When actually required to demonstrate his skills, Mark rated third out of the four candidates while Alice showed exceptional driving ability. Nick and Marsha decided that Alice's lack of experience was outweighed by her skills and her willingness to learn.

If Nick and Marsha had not tested the four candidates, they would have hired Mark–who in fact was **not** *the best candidate for a position that required excellent driving skills. Testing can separate the person who interviews well from the person who can actually do the job. Here are some testing tips:*

- Determine acceptable standards for one or two specific skills.
- Develop an evaluation sheet for use during the test.
- Ensure each candidate performs the same functions.
- Allow candidates plenty of time: avoid putting them under pressure.

Checking References

The Hiring Process

- ☑ Know Your Objectives
- ☑ Job Description
- ☑ Recruitment
- ☑ Interviewing
- ☑ Testing
- ☑ Checking References
- ☐ Making the Selection
- ☐ Offering the Job
- ☐ Employment Agreement
- ☐ Orientation

Once you've narrowed the field to two or three top candidates, you need to obtain the opinion of people who have actually worked with the candidates. Make sure each candidate lists several references and then contact them.

We've provided a sample Reference Checklist which could be used as a guide in doing reference checks.

While reference checking is important, it should be done with the knowledge that the reference provided may not always be entirely accurate. Unfortunately, some previous employers may have furnished an inferior employee with a good reference to get him or her to leave.

As you do your reference check, listen for the tone. Is the person enthusiastic as he or she speaks of the employee, or is there guarded caution? Think about what wasn't said. "He gave me no problems," is very different from "He did his job well."

Start your telephone reference check by identifying yourself and your position. Then proceed along these lines: "_____(give the name) has applied for a position as _____ (give the position) in my business. He/she has permitted me to contact you concerning his/her employment with you. Is this a convenient time for you to talk with me?"

If the time is convenient, proceed with your questions. If the time isn't convenient, set a time agreeable to both of you.

REFERENCE CHECKLIST

General Questions

What were the employee's duties and responsibilities? _____

_____

How much was the employee paid? _____

Why is the employee no longer employed by you? _____

_____

Did the employee take good care of his/her housing? _____

Would you rehire this employee? Yes, No. If no, why not? _____

_____

Personal Suitability Questions

Did the employee have any medical (physical or mental) deficiencies which need to be considered? _____

Did the employee use drugs or alcohol excessively? _____

Did the employee have an even or erratic temperament? _____

Personal Initiative Questions

What was the employee's rate of absenteeism? _____

Was the employee punctual? _____

Was the employee a self-starter? _____

Describe the employee's motivation level. High,Medium, Low _____

Was the employee innovative? _____

Did the employee accept responsibility for positive or negative results? _____

Did the employee supervise others? _____

Potential for Advancement Questions

Did the employee enjoy the job? _____

Was the employee receptive to training? _____

Did the employee accept supervision? _____

Was the employee receptive to constructive criticism? _____

Making the Selection

The Hiring Process

- ☑ Know Your Objectives
- ☑ Job Description
- ☑ Recruitment
- ☑ Interviewing
- ☑ Testing
- ☑ Checking References
- ☑ Making the Selection
- ☐ Offering the Job
- ☐ Employment Agreement
- ☐ Orientation

Now that you've screened, interviewed and tested the candidates, and checked their references, you have to decide which of them you want to hire. Ask yourself the following:

- How effectively will this person represent my business?
- How well will he or she harmonize with co-workers?
- How much energy and enthusiasm has this person shown in pursuing the application?
- Does the person have the necessary physical stamina for the job?

On occasion, you may find in the course of the recruiting and selecting process, that an applicant you particularly favor does not exactly meet the requirements of your position. Instead of hiring a person you favour less, consider adapting the position to meet the skills and talents of the person you wish to have working for you.

Take the acid test: How would I feel if this person worked for my neighbor instead of for me?

Offering the Job/Advising Unsuccessful Candidates

The Hiring Process

- ☑ Know Your Objectives
- ☑ Job Description
- ☑ Recruitment
- ☑ Interviewing
- ☑ Testing
- ☑ Checking References
- ☑ Making the Selection
- ☐ Offering the Job
- ☐ Employment Agreement
- ☐ Orientation

Once you have narrowed the applicants to the top two or three, then go after your #1 choice. You will want to do what you can to encourage the applicant to accept your offer.

How to Make the Offer

The offer should be made in person or by phone. Explain that you have reviewed the field of several qualified candidates and would like to extend a job offer.

Now is the time to review the job description, your expectations and conditions of employment. The following checklist may be helpful as you prepare for the discussion:

What to Include in Job Offer

- Review the quality and quantity of the work expected and the performance levels required. Include reporting relationships.
- Define the evaluation requirements: probationary period, performance appraisal times.
- Explain the work schedule: allow some flexibility if possible.
- Provide a written list of the wages and benefits package you offer.

As you make your job offer, allow the person time to ask any questions. Now is the time to have a clear understanding of what is expected. Surprises later could sour the employer-employee relationship.

Keep your discussion upbeat. Communicate your expectation that the candidate will do a good job and enjoy working for you.

Notify Unsuccessful Candidates

Always notify unsuccessful candidates as quickly as possible once you've made your hiring decision. Keep their applications on file as part of your ongoing recruitment strategy.

Writing a "rejection" letter should not be a negative task. At all costs, you want to avoid the impersonal "I regret to inform you that your application for employment with Meadowlands Farm has been rejected."

Two sample letters follow. You could use these as a guideline but will want to write in the style that's comfortable for you.

Sample 1: Rejecting a Candidate Who HAS Been Seriously Considered

Dear _____,

Thank you for expressing an interest in working for (your firm's name).

The position you applied for has been filled and I am no longer able to actively consider your application for employment. However, I will retain your application in our active files for six months. If another suitable opening occurs, I will consider you as a potential candidate for employment.

I enjoyed talking with you, and appreciate the time you spent with us. Good luck with your job search, and I hope you find a satisfying position in the near future.

Respectfully,

(your name)

Sample 2: Rejecting an applicant who is NOT a serious candidate.

Dear _____,

Thank you for seeking employment with (your firm's name).

After reviewing the applications we received, we have now selected a candidate for the position. We are unable to make you an offer of employment at this time.

Again, thank you for your interest in our business. We hope you find a suitable position in the near future.

Respectfully,

(your name)

Employment Agreement

The Hiring Process

- ☑ Know Your Objectives
- ☑ Job Description
- ☑ Recruitment
- ☑ Interviewing
- ☑ Testing
- ☑ Checking References
- ☑ Making the Selection
- ☑ Offering the Job
- ☑ Employment Agreement
- ☐ Orientation

It is recommended that you write out the terms of employment so both you and your employee understand the conditions to which you are agreeing and can refer to them in the future. Having said this, note there are advantages and disadvantages to written employment agreements.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages

- Specifically defines the terms and conditions of employment.
- Attracts experienced and skilled employees.
- Provides security when circumstances require relocation
- Offers stability by avoiding the whims of family owned farms.

Disadvantages

- Contributes to the risk of court challenges which may involve lengthy litigation.
- Forces an employee to stay who may wish to leave, thereby creating a non-productive situation.
- Increases the risk of getting "stuck" with non-performers.
- Reduces the ability to amend employment practices to meet changed conditions.
- Restricts the ability to adjust compensation levels to performance levels.

What Should Be Included

The following information categories apply to most employment situations and should be included in every employment agreement. Also include any additional categories to provide for the needs of individual employees.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Identification	Name and address of the employee and the farm business
Employment Type	Job title, summary of duties and responsibilities, reporting requirements, limitations such as confidentiality and performance levels
Employment Term	Starting date and ending date (if applicable), provision for employment to end subject to the wishes of either the employee or the employer, renewal considerations
Compensation	Base salary rate, time and method of payment, overtime, employee benefits such as insurance and health, disability benefits, other benefits: e.g. food, housing, etc.
Work Times	Normal working hours, breaks, vacation times, sick leave with pay, statutory holidays
Bonuses	Bonus requirements: e.g., overtime, high performance, etc., payment times
Expenses	Type of expenses paid by the employer: e.g., travel, utilities

A closely spaced, "legalese" contract places the employee at a disadvantage because he or she may be reluctant to sign a document that is difficult to understand. Take a less formal approach by using a letter of agreement or a one-page agreement. Whatever format is used for the agreement, use simple, clear language.

You may want to include with the agreement a welcome to the farm and your personal wishes that the employee will enjoy working for your company.

SAMPLE EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE AGREEMENT

This agreement between _____

and _____ outlines basic terms of employment.

1. The above-named employee has been hired as a _____

   This position includes general responsibilities in the following areas: _____

   _____

   with specific assignments provided on an ongoing basis.

2. It is expected that the period of work will extend from _____ (starting time) to

   _____(ending time), _____days per week.

3. Wages will be $ _____ per _____(hour, day, week, month).

4. Deductions from wages will be made for Canada Pension Plan, Unemployment Insurance and Income Tax.

   Wages will be paid_____(weekly, bi-weekly, semi-monthly, monthly). A statement of earnings and deductions shall be issued with each pay.

5. Accommodations supplied shall consist of _____

   which is valued at $_____ per _____ (week, month). Telephone,

   power, and fuel are included to be paid by _____.

6. Room and Board will be supplied at $_____ per _____ (day, week, month).

7. Time off will amount to _____day(s) per week and should be taken_____ every _____ week.

8. Paid employee vacations will be provided on the basis of _____days each full year of service.

9. Statutory holidays with pay include the following: _____

   _____

10. Each party agrees to provide the other with _____days notice of intent to terminate employment.

11. Other provisions: _____

    _____

    _____

12. This agreement is valid from _____

    to_____ or a previous time agreeable to both parties.

Signed this _____ day of_____, 19____

EMPLOYEE _____

EMPLOYER _____

Orientation

The Hiring Process

- ✓ Know Your Objectives
- ✓ Job Description
- ✓ Recruitment
- ✓ Interviewing
- ✓ Testing
- ✓ Checking References
- ✓ Making the Selection
- ✓ Offering the Job
- ✓ Employment Agreement
- ✓ Orientation

Purpose

A new job may appear complex to a new employee and many details need to be communicated by the employer. The orientation time is a critical time to help a new employee adapt to the philosophy of the operation.

A new employee may need to find out about local services, such as banking, housing, schools, community activities, as well as details about the job.

How does Joe Smith feel when he arrives at your farm to begin work as a milking assistant? He will probably have a strong desire to succeed and anxiety about working in a new environment. Your responsibility is to make Joe feel like he wants to work for you; that he's made the right decision to accept a job at your farm.

By focusing on Joe's needs, you determine the four principal goals of an effective orientation:

- Inspire
- Encourage
- Motivate
- Activate

Use the following chart to accomplish these four goals, looking at them from Joe's point of view.

EMPLOYEE QUESTION	EMPLOYER RESPONSE	ORIENTATION GOAL
Will I like working here?	Set a warm, welcoming tone.	1. **Inspire** confidence and acceptance.
What exactly will I be doing?	Specify procedures for work, equipment, and safety.	2. **Encourage** expertise through knowledge.
Who else works here and how do I fit in?	Introduce other workers and the farm family.	3. **Motivate** by establishing a sense of community.
Who/where do I go for information?	Introduce the immediate supervisor and provide an orientation handout or handbook.	4. **Activate** the lines of authority.

Your never get a second chance to make a first impression.

How Joe Smith reacts during his first hours and days on the job will dramatically affect both his long-term work performance and his attitude to your farm.

Not only will your development of an effective orientation program set a good tone for incoming employees, your program will also yield cost-effective results by reducing staff turnover, absences, tardiness, injuries and errors.

Orientation Handout

Often new employees are reluctant to ask too many questions for fear they'll "look stupid." By providing employees with an orientation handout, you give them control over their learning experience.

Following is an example of an orientation handout used by Mason Farms.

WELCOME TO MASON FARMS

We hope you enjoy your working experience at Mason Farms. To make the most of your time here, please observe the following guidelines:

A. Picking Requirements

- You will be assigned to a row. Please do not move to another row until you have picked all the berries from the row you started or your supervisor asks you to move.
- Select solid, ripe fruit with short stems and hulls on: poor quality berries are not accepted or paid for.
- Pick and handle the fruit without squeezing. Place any moldy, rotten, or damaged fruit in the aisle behind you.
- Carry your full boxes to the packing stand. (Make sure the corners of your boxes are full).
- Remember the number you are assigned: this number is used to tally your daily count.
- If you do not choose to work, please leave the field. Anyone caught fighting, throwing berries, disturbing other pickers, or not complying with the supervisor will be asked to leave after *one* warning.

B. General Requirements

- Picking takes place 3 to 7 days a week, depending on market and berry conditions.
- You must be at least 15 years old to work as a picker on this farm. Younger workers need parental consent.
- Bring a lunch and something to drink with you and extra clothing in case of rain.
- Picking Hours: 7:30 am to 2:00 pm and 5:00pm to 9:00pm.
- Do not loiter around the picking area: leave the field when you finish picking for the day.
- Make sure you arrive at the bus on time: it will not wait for late pickers.

C. Pay Requirements

- You will be paid xx cents per quart, including vacation pay.
- You will receive your pay each Tuesday for all picking done in the previous calendar week.
- Please give one week's notice to receive payment prior to payday.
- If you earn over $136.00 in a week, you will be required to pay UIC deductions.
- You will receive a bonus of xx cents more per quart for all berries picked above 1000 quarts if you are present every picking day.

D. Employee Information

Please complete the attached form and give it to your supervisor on the morning of your first picking day.

As you design your own orientation handout, think about the things a new employee would want to know. Try to include the following:

- details of the job (job description and the relationship of the job to the total operation)
- details about the pay and benefit package (when and where the employee can expect to get paid, starting rates and range, basis for compensation, overtime and holiday rates, policy on pay increases, pay period, deductions, incentives and bonuses, etc.)

- details about the work schedule (regular hours, policies about overtime, lunch and rest breaks, time off, flexibility over attendance and punctuality, how to use a time clock if you have one)
- what to do if an employee cannot make it to work
- what and where facilities are (restrooms, lunch, recreational, first aid, transportation, laundry and lockers)
- the safety program (rules and regulations, safety equipment needs)
- how grievances and corrective actions will be handled
- a Code of Behavior if you have one

If you hire workers whose first language is not English, consider producing an orientation handout in their first language.

Introduction to the Workplace

Carefully plan how you will introduce your employee to the workplace. You need to make employees feel welcome while building their confidence in your organization. The employee needs to know specific information about the job to be performed. Your principal goal is to ensure the employee achieves full job competency at the earliest possible time.

As you sequence your orientation, use the following list as a guide.

TASK	EFFICIENCY TIPS
1. Tour the work area.	Organize the work area exactly as the employee is expected to keep it. Explain standards of cleanliness, tidiness, and hygiene.
2. Show tools and equipment.	Explain the function/purpose of equipment and demonstrate storage, care, and maintenance requirements.
3. Explain the job duties.	Encourage questions to determine the employee's skill level. Emphasize *why* the duties are important.
4. Present one task at a time.	Proceed step-by-step, pausing frequently to check for understanding. *Don't rush!*
5. Supervise first efforts.	Correct errors and reinforce success. Adopt a supportive attitude to reduce employee stress. Continue to supervise the employee until performance standards are met.
6. Let the employee fly solo.	If problems occur, work with the employee to find solutions. Continue to provide encouragement.
7. Maintain a progress record.	Tell the employee when competency has been attained and keep a progress record in the employee's file.

Clearly define the *information resources* available to employees, for example, the supervisor, a handbook or handout, other workers, etc.

Code of Behavior

Having written rules about the standard of behaviour you expect from your employees can make it easier for your employees to function in a manner acceptable to you and will make it easier for you if discipline is required.

If you decide to draw up a code of behaviour, keep in mind that there are some rules that will get you better results from your workers and some that will stifle their productivity.

It is suggested that you have stated rules and consequences in the following areas:

Legal and Safety Rules

- Falsification rules (lying to employer, falsifying documents, etc.)
- Theft
- Rules governing proper use of chemicals and equipment
- Rules prohibiting fighting and abuse, both physical and verbal
- Rules concerning drugs - over-the-counter, prescription and illegal drugs
- Places where smoking is allowed
- Rules governing alcohol use on the job or prior to working hours

Behaviour Rules

- Limitations concerning nonwork activities during working hours (e.g. personal business, reading, etc.)
- Rules concerning leaving the workplace without notification or permission
- Sleeping on the job rules
- Starting, late-time, and quitting rules
- Absenteeism rules
- Breaktime and lunchtime rules
- Vacation and time-off rules

There are some rules that can create resentment among your employees and could result in legal problems. Avoid making rules concerning the following:

- Limiting moonlighting or other employment outside working hours
- Clothing and appearance unless related to job function
- Membership and participation in civic, religious, or private organizations during nonworking hours.

References

The following sources were used in producing The Farm Employers' Handbook. These same sources are recommended for further reading if more information is sought.

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